

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, JANUARY 17, 1899.

The value of the Crawford county system to the Republican party in Scranton can be better estimated after election.

The Change in Governors.

In one respect Colonel Stone today enters the gubernatorial chair enjoying an exceptional advantage. He was so systematically assailed and misrepresented during the campaign preceding the election that should he fall to fulfill his high aims and pledges a great portion of the public would not feel surprised. In that improbable event his critics would take refuge in the recollection that they predicted as much, and this possibility gives him a fine background for the clearer projection into public notice and appreciation of meritorious acts and policies.

Those who said in advance that he would be a disappointment would be unable to ensure him for fulfilling their predictions and will be equally unable to conceal it from the public. On the contrary, he shall in turn disappoint and confound them. In other words, he begins with public opinion not unreasonable in its expectations and has outlined a road upon which to build it upward and onward.

It is not too much to say that in this respect Colonel Stone is more fortunate than his immediate predecessor, who began with the largest plurality ever received by a gubernatorial candidate and ended in the leadership of a minority faction. In fairness to Governor Hastings it should be said that for this sequence of events he was not personally to blame. Circumstances of a nature not easy to modify planned his administration into a period of party factionalism which forbade neutrality on his part and compelled him in self defense to take a position among the fighters. It was his political misfortune to be drawn toward the losing side but once there he battled stoutly. The blows which he has dealt to extravagance and jobbery in legislation have been powerful and resounding. The last few months of his administration, striking out boldly for the right, regardless of personal consequences, he cut open long-standing evils and pointed to their remedy with vigor and with recurring dread by others. Had he maintained this pace from the start he would today be the unquestioned leader of his party.

Colonel Stone does not enter office with the political horizon bright as it was four years ago, but he has the benefit of his predecessor's experiences; he is by nature a harmonizer; while he does not dread yet he does not enjoy fighting, and with his plain, matter-of-fact ways and very good nature to help out his large acquaintance with men and affairs and his considerable natural ability there is abundant reason to expect of him an administration which, if not sensational or brilliant, will be safe, steady and clean, and which will grow in public favor as it goes along.

The recent coasting accidents, while regrettable, have not been unexpected. The carelessness shown this winter in this form of juvenile amusement has been extraordinary. Parents more than children are to blame.

A Step Forward.

We call attention to the brief but thorough argument by Charles Henry Butler, of Washington, D. C., in another column, favoring the joint resolution now pending in congress empowering the president to enter into correspondence with the governments of the principal maritime powers with a view of incorporating into the permanent law of civilized nations the principle of the exemption of all property at sea, not contraband of war, from capture or destruction by belligerent powers. The idea underlying this resolution has had for centuries the sanction of the world's broadest-minded thinkers; it contemplates a step toward the refinement of war which brightens the hope of ultimate universal peace and it should by all means receive the official sanction of the American government, which by the one great power that is free to take a firm stand for higher ideals of civilized warfare.

That the president should want a commission of able men to guide him in his handling of the Philippine problem is natural and wise. A commission composed of such men as Admiral Dewey, General Otis, ex-Minister Denby, President Schurman and Professor Worcester would command the unqualified confidence of the country.

The President and General Miles. If it were true, as it seems to be a number of newspaper correspondents to be, that the president is desirous of having a new commanding general of the army in the place of Nelson A. Miles, we have no doubt that General Miles would feel in honor bound to obey the president's wishes by volunteering his resignation before waiting for it to be solicited. The fact that General Miles does nothing of the kind invests with doubt the latest emanations of the capital city's yellow journalist.

Notwithstanding the friction which has recently been revealed between Miles and Alger and between the professional soldier and the politician elements in the war department it is not surprising the case to say that General Miles is regarded by public opinion as by far the ablest of the men now actively connected with army affairs, and any triumph of purely political influences which should cause his retirement from his present position would be a blow to the true interests of the

army and a shock to public sentiment. He has stood with soldier-like heroism for the welfare of the common soldier; he has taken upon himself the burdens of the regular who, at a time like this, are apt to be kicked hither and yon in the scrapping of the politicians for place and spoils; and as between him and the civilian element which is arrayed against him in both open antagonism and secret intrigue the country so unmistakably indicates its preference that we give little credence to reports which represent the president as being out of patience with Miles.

If the president is out of patience with anybody it must be with those who tried to feed the soldiers of the nation on rotten meat and who, ever since their jobbery was uncovered, have been trying to manufacture evidence to let themselves out of an unpleasant predicament. We can imagine him out of patience with the foul-mouthed commissary general and with the members of the war inquiry commission who silently permitted that official to speak without rebuke his outrageous words in their presence. We can also imagine that he is not altogether pleased with the conduct of his secretary of war, which from beginning to end has been calculated to provoke annoying resentments and needlessly inflame public opinion. But no reason appears why he should cherish ill-will against Miles; rather should he be glad to think that one man wearing the American uniform is brave enough to expose weaknesses and shortcomings in the war management, which is the necessary preliminary to reorganization and reform.

General Egan's modified statement does not condone the original offense. He has flagrantly violated military law. If discipline is to prevail he must face a court martial.

The Era of Prosperity.

Among the many evidences of the arrival of an epoch of prosperity that has never been equaled in the history of the new world is the fact that in the financial relations between New York and London the conditions of a century have been reversed. America heretofore has been financed by London bankers and enterprise in this country has depended to a large extent upon the English capitalists. This year, for the first time, Europe is being financed because it has needs and New York is sending millions to London. In spite of the loans across the water American capitalists have money to invest at home and from present indications will not be backward in furthering the interests of the various industries.

The country was never in as strong a financial position as at present. With confidence restored by the conservative administration of national affairs under Republican leadership, the good effects of the business revival must be general and lasting.

The Chicago Times-Herald asserts that Senator Quay tried to get into McKinley's cabinet. We do not believe it. But if he were in it he would add strength to it.

Expansion's Reflex Influence. Dr. Raymond, the eloquent president of Union college, heartily concurs in the view that the expansion movement has already reacted and will continue to react beneficially upon the interior condition of the people of the United States. In a sermon preached in New York city last Sunday evening he said: "We have been led as a nation in the providence of God, I believe, to assume control over other lands and other peoples. Whether this control is to be permanent or temporary does not concern us now. It is enough that for the immediate future we are charged with new and grave responsibilities, and the effect is to emphasize in the American mind the principles of government. There is something inspiring and reassuring in the seemingly unanimous conviction that it would be a crime to betray this trust; that the best thought of the nation must be given to the governmental problems before us and only the best men appointed to official places. Such is the temper of our people that should any party seek to make political capital out of these new and important offices or treat them in any sense as party spoils, that party would be indignant, driven from power. What does this mean but that the question of clean, honest and efficient government has suddenly been forced to the front, and is the supreme question in America today, taking the place of the petty party wranglings that were so rapidly demoralizing our national life? This cannot resist the conviction that this has been God's way of regenerating American politics. Instead of threatening the life of our republic, I believe that this new responsibility is destined to strengthen and enlarge it by raising a new standard of official worthiness. What we are already demanding for the government of Cuba, Porto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippines, we will not long hesitate to demand for the government at home, and we shall see another illustration of the reflex influence of altruistic effort."

Cannot the "antisl" see and give heed to this truth?

General Sanguilly, the Cuban who is coming to Washington to protest against General Ludlow for refusing to let him make trouble in Havana, might better save his carfare.

Need of Food Laws. The need for the passage and enforcement of better laws in the interest of pure food becomes apparent as evidences of the awful work of the scientific fiends who prepare adulterated provisions are shown, in the increase of dyspepsia, Bright's disease, diabetes and other complaints that may be traced to the consumption of impure food. There is no doubt that the average grocer would prefer to sell pure goods rather than the doctored article, and in many instances their reason for dealing in dangerous stuff is because of the competition with the cheap dealer who offers goods at ruinously low prices. It is well known there are many grades in groceries, and the

dealer who offers things too cheap is probably selling the low grade. Adhering to the motto of the doctored adulterated coffee or a can of vegetables doctored with boracic acid is as bright as that upon packages of pure goods and the low price at which the inferior articles are sold often tempts the buyer who should know better.

For the flood of cheap goods on the provision markets the buyer is largely to blame. If people who purchase groceries would use the care that many exercise in selecting clothing, for instance, the manufacturers of adulterated food would soon be obliged to go out of business. If, however, the heads of families cannot be made to understand that it is poor economy to purchase food that will destroy the digestive organs of the consumer, laws should be enforced that will to a certain extent protect those who are unable or unwilling to take care of themselves.

The case of M. Quémay de Beaurepaire, recently resigned from the Court of Cassation at Paris, should teach all men of mediocre ability the wisdom of preserving golden silence. Until his recent participation in the Dreyfus affair, M. de Beaurepaire had been regarded as a man possessing at least a small quantity of common sense. From the instant, however, that de Beaurepaire began to talk for publication he was recognized at once by the world as a demagogue and intellectual weakling of the most pitiful class. The sudden transition from an honored judge of the court of appeal to a tedious, tactless talking machine has been remarkable. It is an unpleasant discovery that chills one's faith in French justice.

General Mercier, France's ex-minister of war, insists that Dreyfus is guilty, but inasmuch as Dreyfus' innocence means Mercier's guilt his testimony is scarcely disinterested enough to make a sensation.

PORTO RICAN TAXES.

Correspondence of the Associated Press.

San Juan, Porto Rico, Dec. 31.—Dr. Coll was installed as Secretary of the Treasury on November 18. Up to that date the insular treasury held 76 cents in copper, \$3.89 in Venezuelan gold and about \$900 in American bank bills. It seems that it has been the custom in Porto Rico to maintain what is called a guarantee fund. This is a system of deposits to guarantee the faithful performance of both public and private contracts. Amounts to be thus deposited are regulated by certain laws and receipts are issued to depositors by the insular treasury for the monies thus received. Sums of monies in litigation can also be attached and deposited in this same fund until such time as the Courts render judgment concerning their rightful ownership. When this has been done the court issues an order upon the Treasury to pay back the money according to the decision it has reached.

Dr. Coll was greatly surprised to find the insular treasury in such a depleted condition. He knew there should be at least several hundred thousand dollars deposited on account of this general guarantee fund and he at once started an investigation to determine what amount of money was missing. From the various receipts issued by the Treasury already seen by Dr. Coll, he has learned that over three hundred thousand pesos, about two hundred thousand dollars, are missing from this fund, and it is probable that the full amount which has been done away with amounts to nearly five hundred thousand pesos. His investigations are not as yet completed, but he has no doubt but that he will discover documentary evidence of deposits up to this latter amount.

This money was taken to Spain; of this no one has any doubt. It is generally known that the late Captain General Macías, of Porto Rico, delivered to the Government at Madrid 91,000 pesos, and that the Brigadier de Marina Vallarín delivered to his government 46,000 pesos which rightfully belonged to Porto Rico and which were drawn from this guarantee fund. The fund also contained 42,000 pesos which was the capital and total reserve of a school teacher's pension fund. This money was contributed by the teachers of Porto Rico and it is evident that they in their old age and in the title thereto, might enjoy the benefits and advantages which are their due. Macías took this 42,000 pesos to Spain; and it is understood that his expense in this matter was that of the headquarters and main office of the Protective Society of Spanish Teachers at Madrid and as the Porto Rican branch was subjected to the rulings of this main office, the money should be returned there. No one believes the teachers will ever get their pension fund unless some definite and decisive action is taken in their behalf. Dr. Coll is collecting all the evidence he can concerning the matters above set down and when he has fully completed this labor he will submit a report thereon to Major General Henry, recommending that claim be made upon the Madrid government for the restitution of these amounts.

During Spain's possession of Porto Rico the Spanish bank of Porto Rico, under contract to and protected by this insular government, collected from the people and paid over to the government, all taxes and direct contributions. This contract with the Spanish bank terminated upon October 13 last, but it would seem upon investigation that they are much in arrears with certain payments; that there is strong evidence to show they have collected taxes and contributions from the people which they never turned over to Spain. During the month of November, Dr. Coll forced this bank to pay into the Treasury 20,000 pesos collected by them on account of taxes and revenues from government lands rented by individuals and it is his intention to force them to meet all their obligations. This bank is today in the position of the steward who gives up his keys of office but who will not give an accounting of the goods which have passed through his hands.

One of the principal contributions which have been abolished by the military authority in Porto Rico is known locally as Dorechos Reales, in Spanish, Royal Dues in English. There was a crown contribution on all transfers of all kinds of property. It ranged from one half of one per cent. to three per cent. of the value of the property transferred and it brought to the crown of Spain some 185,000 pesos a year. Furthermore, this office, that of the registrar of deeds, was most corrupt. It had one anywhere from one to three thousand pesos to register a deed or conveyance and this over and above all legitimate expense and royal dues. The abolition of the royal dues and the installation of an honest registrar in place of the late incumbent has been a most excellent thing for the country at large. The taxes on personal passports have been taken off; this was a drain on men of slender means and while it only produced 31,000 pesos a year for the state, its abolition eased the people of the country. All stamped paper has been made a thing of the past. Formerly every transaction in which the government had a hand had to be carried on upon paper stamped with certain seals and which was sold by the government itself for its own profit. This was a fruitful source of income, producing nearly 20,000 pesos yearly. It has been Spain's custom to prevent fishing in all rivers and lakes of Porto Rico unless the fisherman paid a good round price for a license. Of course much fishing was done without a license because the government could not watch water ways sufficiently close to punish all offenders, still the measure was a hardship for the poor man and he is better off now that it has been removed. Also a tax called the "territorial tax" which amounted to five per cent. on all agricultural productions, has been removed and in these two last mentioned acts one can see the governor's purpose of lightening the burden for the rich and poor alike.

It is the purpose of Dr. Coll to prepare some statistics upon food consumption in Porto Rico and he will recommend to General Henry that flour and dried meats be admitted from the United States without payment of duty. Dr. Coll will also recommend that material for the clothing of the poorer classes and shoes for the country workers be admitted free of duty. He considers that the people would be greatly benefited if a certain kind of pump which permits them easily to obtain good water anywhere in the low lands could be supplied at a reasonable cost and he will recommend that these also be upon the free list. His idea in these recommendations is to benefit the poor man and in this he will surely find a willing chief in General Henry. The commanding general is fully aware of the anemic, half nourished condition of the poorer Porto Ricans and he also realized that men and women in this condition cannot make good citizens. He is disposed to do all in his power to aid them, and if he cannot get food to them at reasonable prices, prices at which they can buy it, he will seriously consider the advisability of issuing them rations until such time as proper and necessary nourishments are placed within their reach.

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FREEDOM OF PRIVATE PROPERTY ON THE SEA FROM CAPTURE DURING WAR. By Charles Henry Butler. For nearly a century and a quarter efforts have been made to obtain for commerce on the sea exemption from capture and seizure, if possible, the desire of rapine, booty and destruction from the consummation of the ends desired by nations, and which have been finally attained by arbitration of war. Benjamin Franklin, in 1775, promulgated views which the world is gradually "catching up" to, and there now seems to be a fair prospect for the general adoption as rules of international law of those principles of freedom of commerce which were incorporated in the treaty which by negotiation between the United States and the King of Prussia, which provided that even during war "all merchant and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of their respective countries and thereby rendering the necessary conveniences and comforts of human life more easy to be obtained and more general should be allowed to pass unmolested."

The question of freedom of non-offending commerce has since then been the subject of much correspondence and discussion, and, to some extent, of treaty negotiation, but up to the present time there has never been any general convention in regard thereto, although there have been special treaty provisions of exemption from capture, as in the case just cited and our treaty with Italy in 1871. There seems, however, now to be a favorable opportunity of obtaining a general international agreement by which warships on the sea can be controlled by rules of civilization and humanity, similar to those which have been adopted by practically every nation in regard to warfare upon land. The recent and now happily terminated hostilities with Spain have brought the matter into greater prominence than it had during a period of peace, and there is a general feeling of other countries that a conference of representatives from all the maritime powers of the world, to consider this question in all its aspects, would result in a general adoption of the principle, not as a special treaty provision between particular nations, but as a general rule of maritime and naval warfare.

The president, in his annual message, commended to congress at the opening of the present session, recommended the adoption of the principle by this country, and asked that he be authorized to use his powers to the end of obtaining its general adoption by maritime nations. Resolutions have been introduced in both houses of congress endorsing the president's views, and are now under consideration by the appropriate committees. If the existing opportunity shall be available, this great forward step taken under American leadership, it will certainly redound to the lasting credit of the United States, the adoption of which will give every one who aids in the consummation of a movement which three-quarters of a century ago was started by Count Neuchâtel, one of the ablest European diplomats, as "a crown of glory to modern diplomacy."

An Interesting Issue. From the Montrose Democrat. The Scranton Tribune's almanac for 1899 has been received, and is crowded from cover to cover with interesting matter.

Abreast of the More Pretentious. From Montrose Republican. The Scranton Tribune Almanac and Year Book has reached our desk. It is a compact compendium of facts and figures, and as a handy volume for ready reference it will prove invaluable. In points of typography, illustrations and the completeness and intrinsic worth of its subject matter, it is abreast of the more pretentious of the annuals published by the great metropolitan dailies. The almanac is a credit to The Tribune, even as that paper is a credit to Pennsylvania Journalism.

Why He Talked to Himself. There is an Irish porter employed in a large establishment in the city, one of the kind that will make a witty reply to any sort of question. He is very fond of expressing his views in general, and has great admiration of his arguments. If he fails to get listeners he will talk to himself in lieu of something better. A member of the firm, being annoyed one day at his constant muttering, which he was unfortunate enough to hear, "stole" him. "Look here, John, did it ever occur to

Scranton Is Up to Date. From the Lebanon Report. The Scranton Tribune has issued its "Year Book," a volume of 100 pages, containing local and general political statistics, sporting data and replete with a miscellany—all in readable form, carefully prepared by one of our ablest and most valuable handbooks, reflects credit upon the progress and taste of its projectors

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A Valuable Hand Book.

From the Wayne Independent. The Scranton Tribune Almanac for 1899 is a valuable hand book for northeastern Pennsylvania. Besides giving much general information it also gives local facts in surrounding counties, in the way of county officials, official vote of 1888 and many other important items. It is a handy book to have on the desk for ready reference.

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